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ABSTRACT

In this report the Ohio Legislative Office of Education Oversight discusses five Ohio programs designed to serve at-risk high school students and examines their possible overlap. The report describes the goals, strategies, and structure of the following programs: (1) Occupational Work Experience (OWE), a 1-year vocational program of classroom study and on-the-job experience for older high school students; (2) Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA), a program similar to OWE for younger high school students; (3) Jobs for Ohio Graduates (JOG), three program delivery models that provide occupational training; (4) Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP), a series of financial sanctions and bonuses for pregnant teenage welfare mothers; and (5) Graduation, Reality, and Dual-role Skills (GRADS), an in-school family consumer sciences instructional and intervention program. All of these programs had the common goal of preventing students from dropping out. The Office of Legislative Oversight found that the programs did overlap in that they attempted to prevent students from dropping out. However, in most cases this overlap was appropriate because the programs were complementary, served students of different ages, or their activities differed. The Office of Legislative Oversight considered the overlapping to be a problem only when individual students received inappropriate or duplicate services. Appendixes provide a detailed description of the five programs and a discussion of trends in enrollment and funding. (Contains three exhibits, one graphs, and two tables.) (SLD)

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Programs for At-risk High School Students

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The Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) serves as staff to the Legislative Committee on Education Oversight. Created by the Ohio General Assembly in 1989, the Office evaluates education-related activities funded wholly or in part by the state of Ohio. LOEO prepares research reports and information memos on topics selected by its Committee. Research reports provide conclusions and offer recommendations. Information memos are short descriptions of programs or issues.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1
Target Population 1

Individual Program Descriptions 2
Occupational Work Experience (OWE) 2
Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA) 2
Jobs for Ohio Graduates (JOG) 2
Learning, Earning, And Parenting (LEAP) 3
Graduation, Reality, And Dual-role Skills (GRADS) 3

Program Administration 3
Program funding 3
Program accountability 4

Location of Programs 5

Potential for Overlap 5
Appropriate overlap - complementary programs 5
Appropriate overlap - some, but not all, activities are similar 6
Appropriate overlap - similar programs, different students 7
LOEO concern - similar programs, inappropriate enrollment 7

Summary and Conclusion 8
Unanswered questions 8

Appendices

A – Detailed Descriptions of Five At-risk High School Programs ..... A-1 – A-8
B – Trends in Enrollment and Funding ..... B-1 – B-2
C – The 21 Large Urban School Districts C-1

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Programs for At-risk High School Students

In this report, the Legislative Office of Education Oversight discusses five Ohio programs designed to serve at-risk high school students and examines their possible overlap. The report describes the goals, strategies, and structure of the following programs:

- *Occupational Work Experience (OWE);*
- *Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA);*
- *Jobs for Ohio Graduates (JOG);*
- *Graduation, Reality, And Dual-role Skills (GRADS); and*
- *Learning, Earning, And Parenting (LEAP).*

Introduction

In Ohio's schools, as in all of the nation's schools, some students are unlikely to graduate from high school. Nationally, about 30% of high school students are at risk of dropping out. In addition, some students graduate without the skills necessary to enter the work force successfully. In 1996, according to data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS), Ohio's graduation rate was about 67%. In urban districts, the graduation rate was only 49%.

For the purposes of this report, students who are unlikely to graduate or likely to graduate without the necessary work skills are considered "at risk of school failure." The five programs discussed in this report target two main groups of at-risk students: those who are at risk of school failure due to poor academic performance, perhaps compounded by family poverty; and those who are at risk of dropping out due to pregnancy or parenthood.

All of these programs have the common goals of preventing students from dropping out of school and preparing them for responsible adulthood. Because of these common goals, the programs also have similar philosophies, approaches, and services. No mechanism prevents students from enrolling in more than one program.

Some state legislators are concerned that these at-risk programs provide overlapping services. This memo investigates whether these programs overlap and if so, whether this overlap presents a problem.

Target population

Each of the at-risk programs has its own criteria for participation. Indicators of being at risk of dropping out usually include:

- irregular school attendance;
- frequent tardiness;
- infrequent participation in extra-curricular activities;
- negative self-image;
- poor health;
- delinquent or aggressive behavior;
- pregnancy or parenthood; or
- being academically or economically disadvantaged.

Academically disadvantaged students typically perform below grade level on norm-referenced standardized tests, fail a grade level, or score poorly on the state proficiency tests. Economically disadvantaged students usually come from families with incomes at or below the poverty level, receive public assistance, or have unemployed parents or guardians. Without some intervention it is unlikely that these students will remain in school, graduate, or have the skills to become responsible adults.

Students who exhibit problems in school for a short time are not "at risk" of school failure and should not be enrolled in these programs. For example, it would be inappropriate to enroll a teenager who has had years of average grades, test scores, and attendance, who suddenly experiences a drop in grades or fails one or two courses.

Individual Program Descriptions

The five programs discussed in this report focus on improving the capability of individual at-risk students. Three of the programs (OWE, OWA, JOG) are job-related and often cited as part of the statewide School-To-Work initiative. The remaining two programs (LEAP and GRADS) address the needs of teenage parents. All of these programs are briefly described below with more detailed descriptions provided in Appendix A.

Occupational Work Experience (OWE)

Occupational Work Experience is a specialized one-year vocational program for high school students age 16 or older who are at risk of dropping out. Most OWE students (65%) are either eleventh or twelfth graders. According to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Division of Vocational and Adult Education, OWE is designed to develop student motivation, to change student attitudes toward education, and to develop the attitudes and abilities necessary for students to become gainfully employed or to complete their education.

The school guidance counselor usually identifies eligible students. In many districts, OWE and OWA programs safeguard against inappropriate enrollment of students. For example, counselors may use a selection procedure that assigns numerical values to student attributes such as grades and attendance. Only students whose scores fall within a specific range may enroll in the programs.

OWE instructors coordinate classroom study with on-the-job experiences. According to a state-level administrator, most jobs (up to 90%) are in the fast food industry.

The curriculum concentrates primarily on employability skills and the academic subjects in which students are having difficulty, most commonly math. OWE is designed to be a "terminal," one-year intervention program, after which students return to mainstream classes. However, a student may remain in the program for a second year with written notification to the ODE staff person who oversees the programs across the state.

Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA)

Occupational Work Adjustment is very similar to OWE except OWA targets younger teenagers, ages 14 and 15. According to ODE, the OWA program "emphasizes career exploration, preparation for the world of work, paid work experience, and academic intervention in a non-traditional classroom setting that facilitates individual and small group instruction." OWA programs can be in middle schools, high schools, or combine middle school and high school students. School counselors usually select participants.

Typically, a student spends half the day in OWA and half the day in traditional classes. The half day in OWA usually includes a paid work experience that is typically in a school setting. It also provides a technical class that relates academic and work experiences and an academic class in a subject the student finds difficult.

Jobs for Ohio Graduates (JOG)

Jobs for Ohio Graduates has three program delivery models, aimed at the successful transition from school to work for students identified as "at risk of not graduating or not successfully entering the labor force upon graduation, or both." Indicators of students' success in JOG are graduation, enrollment in higher education programs, working full time, or working part time while attending college.

Students in the **senior program** model spend about an hour a day in a JOG classroom during their senior year and receive 12 months of follow-up after they leave school. Students complete a minimum of 60 classroom activities that lead to 30 competencies in six clusters: career development; job attainment; job survival; basic academics; leadership; and self-development. This is the most frequently used JOG model, with about 10,500 students enrolled during the 1997-1998 school year.

A separate five-year program starts during the summer between the eighth and ninth grade and continues for 12 months after

graduation. In addition to summer work experiences, students receive year-round instruction in study skills and necessary academic remediation. Approximately 2,000 students are expected to participate during the 1997-1998 school year.

The recently implemented **out-of-school program** provides dropouts with 540 hours of occupational specific training to help them enter the work force as well as earn a diploma or a General Education Development (GED) certificate. During the 1996-1997 school year, about 130 students participated in the out-of-school program. During the 1997-1998 school year, approximately 1,000 students are expected to participate.

Learning, Earning, And Parenting (LEAP)

The LEAP program is a series of financial sanctions and bonuses for pregnant teenage welfare mothers, designed to encourage them to return to or remain in school. It does not provide particular classroom activities for participants and does not change a student's day-to-day school activities or graduation requirements. Most LEAP participants also enroll in the GRADS program where they receive intervention services.

This program is administered by the Ohio Department of Human Services. School districts provide very limited staff time for LEAP. Case managers, who work for county human services agencies, provide most of the services.

LEAP is mandatory for any teen who receives Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits, is a parent or is pregnant, and has not graduated or attained a GED certificate. Unless the administering local human services agency exempts the teen, she automatically enrolls in LEAP and must re-enroll in school. Once she enrolls in LEAP, her next monthly check will include a one-time re-enrollment bonus. Satisfactory school attendance will increase her TANF check by $62 each month thereafter. Graduating from school results in a $200 bonus. Because the average monthly TANF check is $274, the combination of sanctions and bonuses has the potential to change her monthly income by more than 20%.

Graduation, Reality, And Dual-role Skills (GRADS)

According to ODE, the GRADS program is an "in-school family consumer sciences instructional and intervention program for pregnant and parenting adolescents." Students enrolled in GRADS also enroll in a full load of coursework, whether in an academic or an occupational track. GRADS activities usually occur in a daily one-period elective class. The course curriculum includes a practical approach to skills and knowledge of pregnancy, parenting, economic independence, and self-reliance. Approximately 11% of participants are male parents.

The objectives of GRADS are to:

- increase the likelihood of student graduation;
- help participants with health care practices;
- teach child development and parenting skills;
- prepare students for the world of work; and
- encourage goal setting that balances work and family.

****

Program Administration

Program funding

Students enrolled in OWE, OWA, or GRADS do not generate additional state funding for school districts. Considered career readiness programs, all three are funded as vocational units. If districts did not receive vocational unit funding for the students in these programs, districts would receive state basic aid funding for them. In general, career readiness programs such as OWE, OWA, and GRADS are less expensive than other types of vocational

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programs, such as industry certified or workforce development programs.

In contrast to OWE, OWA, and GRADS, the state provides districts with additional dollars for students enrolled in the JOG program. Funds come from a set-aside in the vocational budget (GRF 200-507) and from the Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid line item. In addition to the JOG money, districts receive the basic aid for regular students or unit funding for vocational or special education students. The federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) has greatly reduced its funding for the JOG program in recent years. Therefore, the General Assembly replaced the JTPA funds with a special one-time JOG allocation in the 1998-1999 biennial budget.

School districts do not receive funding for the LEAP program. LEAP program incentive dollars go directly to the enrolled students. This money is part of the Ohio Department of Human Service's TANF budget.

Appendix B shows the trends in enrollment and funding for the five at-risk programs.

Program accountability

Three programs, OWE, OWA, and GRADS, are accountable to ODE's Division of Vocational and Adult Education. Every OWA and OWE teacher submits a year-end report to ODE. Year-end data includes changes in student behavior, such as decreased absences, failures, and suspensions. In addition, all vocational programs participate in ODE's Measuring and Planning Process (MaPP) once every five years. MaPP evaluates the quality of vocational programs based on student outcomes. The five-year rotation for MaPP reviews allows districts to implement improvement plans between reviews. As vocational programs, OWE, OWA, and GRADS also answer to their own advisory committees, composed of local employers, former program graduates, and parents.

The OWA and GRADS programs are also subject to additional monitoring. The OWA program is required to obtain re-approval from the U.S. Department of Labor every two years. The state GRADS office, within ODE, monitors the impact of its program through an ongoing research project. For this research, individual teachers aggregate and report data twice a year. For example, using teacher supplied information about prenatal care and low birth weights, pregnancy outcomes of GRADS students are compared to those of all Ohio teens.

The JOG program is accountable to the national Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG). This national parent organization has strict accreditation standards and review processes for its Ohio affiliate and requires local programs to document their students' performance quarterly. A state governing board sets statewide policy for the program, while private, non-profit local JOG boards administer JOG programs. Half of the members of the local groups generally come from the private sector, and the others come from schools and local government agencies.

LEAP is administered by, and accountable to, county departments of human services. ODE has no monitoring or oversight responsibilities for this program.

Location of Programs

Exhibit 1 shows some characteristics of districts in which the five at-risk programs were available in 1996. In 56 districts, LEAP is the only at-risk program offered. However, students in these districts may have been able to enroll in one of the other four at-risk programs through Joint Vocational Districts.

Exhibit 1
Locations of the Five At-risk Programs (1996)

Programs	Number of 611 Districts with Programs	Characteristics of Districts Offering Programs
All Five	68	Nearly half are urban or large urban districts.*
OWE	260	One-third also offer JOG, including 13 of the 21 large urban districts.
OWA	272	178 also offer OWE.
JOG	167	All 21 large urban districts will offer this program in 1997-1998.
GRADS	488	Available in all 21 large urban districts; most districts not offering GRADS are rural or suburban.
LEAP	611	The only program offered in 56 districts.

* The 21 large urban districts are listed in Appendix C.

Potential for Overlap

All of the programs addressed in this report have the common goals of preventing students from dropping out of school and preparing them for responsible adulthood. Some legislators are concerned that several of the programs provide overlapping services. After investigating the issue, LOEO considers most of the overlap among these programs to be appropriate.

Appropriate overlap -- complementary programs

Some students may benefit from participation in more than one program. A pregnant teen may need both parenting skills (GRADS) and connections to the world of work (JOG); a student with long-term academic and social difficulties could benefit from intervention in both middle school (OWA) and high school (OWE). Exhibit 2 shows at which grade students can participate in each program.

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Exhibit 2
Program Eligibility by Grade

Program	Grade						
	7	8	9	10	11	12	Post-high school
OWE*							
OWA*							
JOG senior							
JOG 5-year							
JOG out-of-school							
LEAP							
GRADS							

*Depends on age of student, not grade. Exhibit shows typical grades of enrolled students.

Examining LEAP and GRADS, the two programs for teenaged parents, reveals that they do not overlap with each other. In fact, the goals and activities of LEAP and GRADS are complementary. The mission of LEAP is to provide financial incentives that encourage pregnant students to stay in or return to school, while GRADS focuses the students' efforts on skills needed to become responsible adults and parents. In this situation, the programs are targeting the same student population but are providing different services. Many LEAP recipients also enroll in GRADS.

Appropriate overlap -- some, but not all, activities are similar

Participants in the three programs that connect at-risk students with the world of work (OWE, OWA, and JOG) receive employability training. During the school year, the JOG senior program is an elective, single-period class that students can include as part of a full-day schedule. After students graduate, JOG teachers provide twelve months of follow-up activities and counseling. In contrast, OWE and OWA require students to work during half of the school day and participate in specific courses during the remainder of the day. A summary of the main similarities and differences in activities is in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 3
Activities of Work-Related At-risk Programs

Program	Who is eligible	Class in employability skills	Paid work experience	Academic classes, assistance	Post-high school follow-up
OWE	Students 16 years old or older	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
OWA	Students 14 or 15 years old	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
JOG senior	High school seniors	Yes	No	No	Yes
JOG 5-year	Students who have completed eighth grade	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
JOG out-of-school	Drop-outs of any age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appropriate overlap -- similar programs, different students

The goals and activities of OWE and OWA are nearly identical. They both use work experiences and academic assistance to keep students in school. The difference between OWE and OWA is that the two programs target students of different ages, so individual students are not enrolled in both programs at the same time. However, a student could complete a year in OWA and then enroll in OWE when he is older.

Districts operating at least one program at capacity may use some of the student slots in a second program as a back-up. For example, state-funded OWE units can each serve no more than 25 students. In districts with both programs, students "closed out" of OWE units can be referred to a JOG senior program. Although some individual students might benefit most from OWE's work activities, JOG will provide some of the services they need.

LOEO concern -- similar programs, inappropriate enrollment

LOEO confirmed that it is possible for students to enroll in more than one program, although the state has not yet collected data necessary to identify districts in which this happens. Thus, it is possible that districts offering several programs for at-risk students are duplicating some services. In LOEO's opinion, the overlap of biggest concern is the potential for high school seniors to enroll simultaneously in the JOG senior program and OWE. This concern rises from two main factors. First, both programs include similar subject matter in their employability skills classes. Second, this overlap has the greatest possibility of occurring because the most frequently used JOG model serves exclusively seniors, and about a third of OWE students are seniors.

LOEO is also concerned with the large number of high school seniors enrolled in OWE. One of OWE's goals is to provide intervention for one year, after which a student returns to "mainstream" classes. According to the state administrator of OWE, the large number of twelfth-grade participants is of concern. The program, designed to facilitate a return to regular classes, has become "terminal," meaning that these students graduate before re-enrolling in regular classes. In addition, when OWE students are seniors, they prevent the participation of younger students who might complete an OWE class and move into regular courses.

Summary and Conclusions

In sum, several state legislators are concerned that at-risk programs provide overlapping services. LOEO studied five at-risk programs for high school students. Three of the programs are work-related (OWE, OWA, JOG), and two (LEAP and GRADS) provide services to teenage parents.

LOEO finds that the five at-risk programs do overlap in that they all attempt to prevent students from dropping out of school. However, in most cases, this overlap is appropriate because the programs are complementary, serve students of different ages, or their activities differ. LOEO considers the overlapping approaches and services to be of concern when individual students receive inappropriate or duplicate services.

Unanswered questions

As noted, this memo focuses on the overlap among five programs. Many districts offer more than one of these programs, and many students are eligible to participate in more than one. Since the state-level information from ODE does not contain individual student records, LOEO could not identify how often students enroll in more than one program. (LOEO's request for this information during the course of this study prompted ODE staff to ask district program administrators to begin collecting these data from individual schools.)

In addition, LOEO did not evaluate the relative merits of each program; further study would be needed before LOEO could recommend expansion, continuation, or elimination of any of them.

LOEO also sees the need for a future comparison of the results of the five-year JOG program to those of OWE and OWA. This recently implemented JOG model provides intervention services for five years, starting when the student is 14 years old. The activities of the first four years of this model resemble those of OWE and OWA. However, because so few students have participated in this JOG model, it is too early to make this comparison.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A
Detailed Descriptions of Five At-risk High School Programs

As noted in the body of this report, Ohio's statewide at-risk programs (OWE, OWA, JOG, LEAP, and GRADS) primarily focus on improving the capabilities of students. This appendix repeats some of the most important information presented in the report and provides more detailed descriptions of the five programs.

Though all five programs attempt to keep students in school, they target two different groups of students. Three of the programs, Occupational Work Experience (OWE), Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA), and Jobs for Ohio Graduates (JOG), connect students at risk of academic failure with the world of work. Because of this connection with the world of work, these three programs are often cited as part of the statewide School-to-Work initiative. The two remaining programs, Learning, Earning, And Parenting (LEAP) and Graduation, Reality, And Dual Role Skills (GRADS), help teen parents as they assume parental responsibilities.

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Occupational Work Experience (OWE)

Background

The Occupational Work Experience program started as a pilot program in 1962 in Warren, Ohio and is now in 260 school districts, 35 joint vocational districts, two education service centers, and the Department of Youth Services. OWE is defined as "a specialized program of instruction designed for high school students who have become alienated from school and who have been classified as at risk." Students must be at least 16 years old to participate.

According to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), OWE is designed to develop student motivation, to change student attitudes toward education, and to develop the necessary attitudes and abilities to enable the student to become gainfully employed or to complete their education.

Program structure

The curriculum concentrates primarily on employability skills and the appropriate academic subjects based on student needs. OWE instructors coordinate classroom study with on-the-job experiences. OWE is designed to be a one-year intervention program; however, a student may remain in the program for a second year with written notification to ODE. Most OWE students (65%) are either eleventh or twelfth graders.

The OWE program expects its students to achieve one or more of the following:

- high school graduation;
- enrollment in an occupation-specific vocational program;
- enrollment in a regular academic program;
- full-time employment;
- continuation of education beyond high school; or
- development of a career passport.

The minimum enrollment per instructor is 15 and the maximum is 25. Most students schedule two periods in regular academic classes, two periods in OWE classes, and two and one-half hours of on-the-job work experience. The OWE classroom portion can consist of two "work-related" classes or one "work-related" class and one academic class in a subject in which the students are having difficulty. The related periods focus on employability skills and behavior modification.

Students learn about such work-related topics as problem solving, work ethic, job searches, interpersonal relationships, and leadership skills. If an academic class is offered in an OWE classroom, it must be taught by an OWE teacher who is also certified or endorsed in the academic area being taught.

Typically, students attend classes in the morning and report to an approved work site during the afternoon. At the work site, they are supervised by the employer under a signed agreement between the employer, the school, the student, and the parent or guardian. While the student is working, the coordinator visits the job site at least once every two weeks. According to a state-level program administrator, most jobs (up to 90%) are in the fast food industry because federal law prohibits students under 18 from working in many other industries.

OWE students must meet the high school graduation requirements specified by ODE. The local school determines the number of credits that will be given for in-school and on-the-job participation. In most districts, students receive two credits for their work experience and one credit for each OWE work-related or academic class.

Work experience and related classes usually count as elective classes. The school decides if the OWE academic class will count as one of the academic units required for graduation. The new high school graduation requirements enacted by Senate Bill 55 of the 122nd General Assembly may be difficult for OWE students to meet because of the increase in the number of academic units required.

Students. The school guidance counselor usually identifies eligible students. In many districts, the counselor uses an assessment tool that assigns numerical values to factors that contribute to being at risk. OWE students are often slow or non-readers with high absenteeism and/or suspensions. To be eligible students must be:

- 16 years old or older;
- identified as unable to succeed in either regular academic or vocational programs;
- identified as either academically or economically disadvantaged; and
- a potential dropout but employable.

Staff. Currently, all OWE coordinators have at least a one-year vocational teaching certificate which may be issued after providing evidence of the following:

- graduation with a bachelor's degree in education from an approved institution;
- two years of satisfactory teaching experience under a standard teaching certificate;
- one year full-time employment in a field other than education;
- completion of an approved program of pre-service vocational teacher education; and
- completion of an examination prescribed by the state board to verify basic skills and technical competence in the teaching area.

Additional coursework allows a teacher with a one-year vocational certificate to obtain a provisional certificate, followed by a professional certificate, and finally a permanent certificate. The requirements and timelines for each certificate vary, but always include satisfactory teaching experience and additional education work. All new OWE teachers must participate in specific, ongoing staff development. This certification process will change under the new teacher licensure requirements. There will no longer be a separate OWE certificate, only an endorsement on the teaching license to teach OWE.

A specified amount of "extended time" was formerly required of OWE teachers. OWE teachers were paid to work a few weeks before school started or immediately following the school year. Teachers used the extended time to conduct home visits and to develop jobs for students in the community. Am. Sub. H.B. 223 of the 121st General Assembly eliminated the provision requiring extended time as a condition of eligibility for funding. While some schools still pay teachers for extended time, the state no longer requires them to do so.

Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA)

Background

As noted, Occupational Work Adjustment is a one- or two-year vocational program targeting younger at-risk teenagers. According to the Division of Vocational and Adult Education, it "emphasizes career exploration, preparation for the world of work, paid work experience, and academic intervention in a non-traditional classroom setting that facilitates individual and small group instruction."

A 1975 amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act allowed 14 and 15 year olds to participate in a work experience program during school hours. The official name of the federal program is the Work Experience and Career Exploration Program (WECEP). Ohio's WECEP program is the OWA program. Federal regulations require state education agencies to get approval from the U.S. Department of Labor every two years to continue the local programs.

The mission of the OWA program is to help at-risk students ages 14 and 15 to:

- improve their academic competence;
- develop a career plan that guides their transition from school to work; and
- demonstrate a positive work ethic.

Program structure

OWA programs can be in middle schools, high schools, or combine middle school and high school students. The school is responsible for providing adequate classroom facilities. Classes require a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 25 students.

Typically, a student spends half the day taking regular academic classes and half the day in OWA. OWA consists of a paid work experience, a technical class, and a required academic class. Technical classes relate academic and work experiences. Examples of topics covered in these classes are study skills, money management, interpersonal relationships on the job, career exploration, and employability skills. OWA teachers work with other teachers to learn what problems the students are having. They may help students with homework in other academic classes or help them pass the proficiency test in other subjects. The OWA academic class is usually in a specific subject that the student finds difficult, which is often math.

Students receive credit toward graduation for all three parts of the program. High school students enrolled in OWA usually have adequate opportunity and time to meet high school graduation requirements. However, in middle schools, it is more difficult to meet requirements for promotion to high school while attending OWA activities. For this reason, some districts do not want OWA in middle schools. However, because the majority of OWA students have failed only individual subjects, and not failed an entire grade, the middle school principal has the option of sending the students to high school without meeting all the academic requirements. Similar to high schools, middle schools can provide "educational options," which provide alternative ways to meet some requirements, such as those for art and physical education.

OWA students hold jobs in both the private sector and in the schools. Examples of employers in the private sector include beauty shops, nursing homes, and fast food chains. However, transportation is a problem for many 14- and 15-year old students. In addition, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) limits the type of jobs students in OWA may hold, because it considers many of the available jobs to be too hazardous. For example, OWA students may not drive motor vehicles, operate power-driven machines, use circular saws or hoisting equipment, or work on roofs. For these reasons, most OWA jobs are in schools. Examples of jobs in schools are teacher aides, kindergarten aides, outside maintenance workers, cafeteria workers, and office aids.

Teachers evaluate student workers as part of the training plan. Employers also evaluate students every nine weeks. In the related classes, students and teachers discuss areas that need improvement for both school and private-sector jobs.

Students. To participate in OWA, students must be 14 or 15 years old, at risk of dropping out of school, and either academically or economically disadvantaged. School counselors select them using criteria similar to those used in OWE.

Staff. Teacher-coordinators are responsible for teaching the related technical and academic classes and coordinating the paid work experiences. Although some districts have several long-standing job stations with local companies, most teacher-coordinators must contact employers constantly for potential jobs. This process, called job development, occurs during teachers' "coordination time" when the students are working.

Similar to OWE teachers, OWA teachers have vocational certificates and follow a similar process to obtain certification. OWA teachers must also have either an academic certificate or an academic endorsement to teach academic areas, an approach which is similar for OWE teachers.

Similar to the OWE program, the state no longer requires a district to provide OWA teachers with extended time, although schools may still pay teachers for extended time if they choose.

Jobs for Ohio Graduates (JOG)

Background

The Jobs for Ohio Graduates (JOG) program began in the 1986-1987 school year as part of the national Jobs for American Graduates (JAG) program. Ohio now has the largest number of students participating in a JAG-related program of any state. All JAG programs include a public-private sector partnership, with the private sector providing both financial support and personnel. The program aims for "successful school-to-work transition." Indicators of students' success are graduation, enrollment in higher education programs, working full time, or working part time while attending college.

Program Structure

JOG has three different implementation models. All of the program models share key program elements developed by JAG. These elements include classroom instruction in employment competencies, job search assistance, provision of follow-up assistance after leaving school, and accountability of the instructor to a school advisory committee.

Students in the JOG **senior-program model** spend about an hour a day in a JOG classroom for the nine months of their senior year, and receive 12 months of follow-up after they leave school. In school, students complete a minimum of 60 classroom activities that lead to 30 competencies in six clusters: career development, job attainment, job survival, basic academics, leadership, and self-development. During the follow-up period, teachers tailor activities to individual students' needs. For example, a student who is employed may discuss any work-related challenges with a JOG teacher once a month, while an unemployed student may get weekly assistance with tracking down job leads or preparing for interviews.

The **five-year program** serves students who have more than one of five factors putting them at risk – they are older than others in their grade, have poor academic skills, are frequently absent, are from a low-income family, or have been affected by ongoing family or personal problems. This five-year program identifies eighth-grade students who may benefit from the program. Activities begin during the summer between the eighth and ninth grade. In addition to summer jobs, students receive year-round instruction in study skills and necessary academic remediation. The curriculum basis is providing students with knowledge to perform specific skills. The guidance provided by the school continues for 12 months after graduation.

The recently developed **out-of-school program** provides dropouts with 540 hours of occupational-specific training and helps them earn a diploma or a General Education Development (GED) certificate and enter the work force.

Students. Each of the three JOG models serves students of different ages. All three models include vocational and mainstream students identified by the school as at risk of not graduating, not successfully entering the labor force upon graduation, or both. The senior program targets high school seniors, the five-year program starts in the ninth grade, and students of any age who have dropped out of school may participate in the out-of-school model. As in OWE and OWA, counselors recommend students for participation in JOG. These students can be from a joint vocational or a comprehensive high school. At least half of the participants must be in the bottom quartile of their class academic standings; only one fourth can be from the top half of the class.

Staff. Private, non-profit local JOG boards administer JOG programs. Half of the members of these groups generally come from the private sector, and the others come from schools and local government agencies.

Unlike OWE and OWA teachers, JOG instructors are not required to have teaching certificates. The instructors are often employees of the private, non-profit boards, instead of the school district. The private, non-profit boards are private-sector employers. Therefore, the National Labor Relations Act, rather than a collective bargaining unit, governs the boards' actions toward JOG teachers.

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Learning, Earning, And Parenting (LEAP)

Background

The LEAP program is a series of financial sanctions and bonuses for pregnant teenage welfare mothers, designed to encourage them to return to, or remain in, high school. The program does not provide specific classroom activities for participants. The Ohio Department of Human Services implemented LEAP statewide in 1989 and made its requirements for bonuses more stringent in September 1996.

Program structure

Any teenage mother who applies for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is referred to a LEAP case manager, who conducts an initial assessment. If the teen lacks reasons not to go to school or enroll in a GED program, she automatically enrolls in LEAP, and is required to re-enroll in school. Problems that most often interfere with attending school are transportation and childcare. The caseworker attempts to help the teen mother find solutions to these problems.

Once a student enrolls in LEAP, her school must then inform the county human services agency that she has registered for school. Her next monthly TANF check will then include a one-time re-enrollment bonus of $62. Thereafter, the school provides a monthly attendance record to the county caseworker.

The teen mother's monthly TANF check will be reduced by $62 if she has more than four total absences in a month, has more than two unexcused absences, withdraws from school, or fails to register for school. If she has adequate attendance, her monthly check will increase by $62. If she successfully completes the school year, she receives a $62 grade completion bonus. Finally, when a participant graduates, she receives a $200 bonus.

The combination of sanctions and bonuses has the potential to change the monthly income of TANF recipients by over 20%. For example, if a participant is eligible for a monthly grant of $274 (average 1996 grant of a teen living on her own with one child), a bonus increases her monthly income to $336; sanctions reduce it to $212. If the teen mother is subject to more than six months of sanctions, all of her TANF benefits are eliminated until she has satisfactory school attendance.

Participation in LEAP changes neither a student's day-to-day school activities nor graduation requirements. However, most LEAP participants also enroll in the Graduation, Reality, And Dual-role Skills (GRADS) program where they receive intervention services. In fact, state administrators of the LEAP program attribute much of its success to collaboration with the GRADS program.

At a local level, coordination with GRADS results in collaboration between the human services agency and the school. For example, in one large city, human services social workers perform all of their LEAP duties right in the schools. In the majority of other locations, a caseworker comes into the classroom twice a month. However, in some other, usually rural, areas, the county human services agency contracts the LEAP case management to GRADS programs.

Students. To be eligible for TANF, any teen who is a custodial parent or pregnant, and has neither graduated nor attained a GED must participate in LEAP. Circumstances that would prevent consistent school attendance may lead to a student's exemption from mandatory participation. For example, exemptions may be granted for:

- teens beyond the third month of pregnancy;
- teens with newborns less than 3 months old;
- teens with long-term illnesses, or teens who have children with long-term illnesses; and
- teens who have been expelled from school.

However, teens may choose to participate, in spite of pregnancy or long-term illness.

Staff. School districts provide very limited staff time for this program. School administrators or support staff supply attendance reports to local human services agencies. LEAP case managers, who work for county human services agencies, provide most of the services.

Graduation, Reality, And Dual-role Skills (GRADS)

Background

As noted in the body of this report, Graduation, Reality, And Dual-role Skills serves students who are at risk of dropping out of school due to pregnancy and the responsibilities of being parents. It began in 1980 with three teachers in three vocational schools teaching students from 12 districts. The program has evolved to include teachers in vocational, comprehensive high, middle, and alternative schools. In the 1995-1996 school year, 488 local districts provided GRADS programs.

According to ODE, the GRADS program is an "in-school family consumer sciences instructional and intervention program for pregnant and parenting adolescents." The objectives of GRADS are to:

- increase the likelihood of student graduation;
- help participants with health-care practices;
- teach students child development and parenting skills;
- prepare students for the world of work; and
- encourage student goal setting that balances work and family.

In 1996, the Program Effectiveness Panel of the U.S. Department of Education revalidated GRADS as an "exemplary educational program."

The state GRADS office within ODE determines the success of individual programs through an ongoing research project. For this research, individual teachers aggregate and report data twice a year. The GRADS office compares information concerning the number of GRADS students who stay in school or graduate to the statewide dropout rate. Using teacher-supplied information about prenatal care and low and very low birth weights, the Ohio Department of Health compares pregnancy outcomes of GRADS students to those of all Ohio teens.

Program structure

Each local program has an advisory committee, similar to other vocational community committees required under federal law (Perkins Act). The vocational committees consist of members representing industries and businesses who hire the vocational school's graduates. Because GRADS has no direct connection to a particular industry or job skill, members of human services agencies and health professionals form the GRADS advisory committees.

In urban and suburban settings, GRADS activities occur in a daily one-period elective class. Students enrolled in GRADS also enroll in a full load of coursework, whether in an academic or vocational track. In rural areas, there are seldom enough students in one school to warrant a full-time GRADS teacher. Teachers often teach classes in more than one school. In order to make it easier for teachers to travel to schools that may be distant from one another, GRADS classes often meet twice a week for longer sessions, instead of daily.

The GRADS course curriculum includes a practical approach to skills and knowledge that will help the parent with pregnancy, parenting, economic independence, and self-reliance. For example, to increase her understanding of pregnancy, a student learns practices related to wellness of both mother and fetus, how her body changes as the fetus develops, how labor and delivery typically proceed, and the costs associated with pregnancy and parenthood.

Students. Any high school student who is pregnant or is a parent is eligible to participate. Approximately 11% of participants are male parents. Students enrolled in GRADS are subject to their local district and state graduation requirements, including passing the state ninth-grade proficiency test.

Staff. The local school districts have the responsibility to hire and fire GRADS teachers. To instruct GRADS classes, teachers must be certified in family and consumer

sciences. New teacher licensure laws will have little or no effect on the qualifications for GRADS instructors.

In urban and suburban settings, most GRADS teachers teach three GRADS classes. Teachers use a statewide resource guide to translate required competencies into learning activities and to provide background information. In some districts, a GRADS teacher might have one additional class assignment. During the remainder of the school day, they have a planning period and two conference periods.

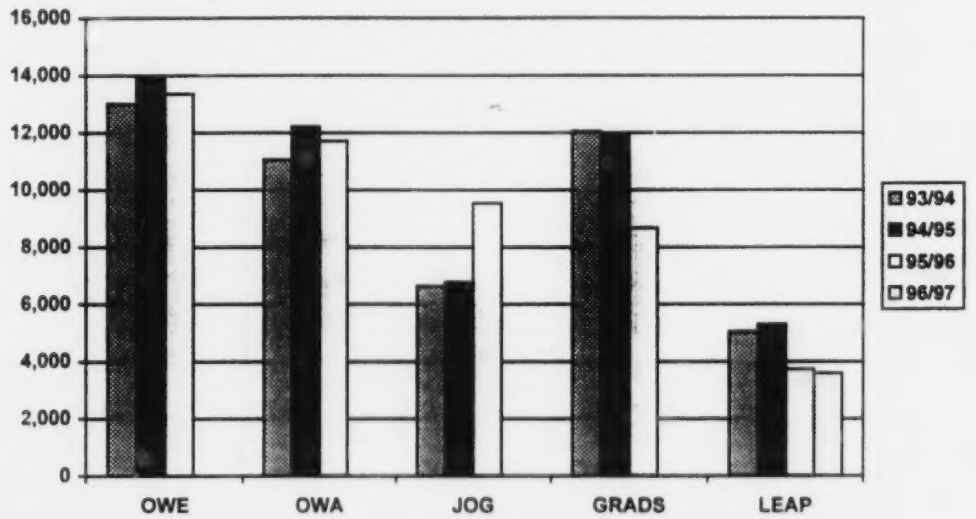
Teachers use conference periods for outreach activities, working with parents of teens, and coordinating activities of the GRADS program with those of other agencies. One of the coordination activities revolves around finding childcare. A representative from ODE explained, "Child-care is pretty sticky here in Ohio. We are trying to get a handle on 'who watches these babies?' We do not have good data on Ohio. But, nationally, 50% of teen mothers have a family member or friend who provides care, and the other half must find a paid situation."

APPENDIX B
Trends in Enrollment and Funding

In general, enrollments in Occupational Work Experience (OWE) and Occupational Work Adjustment (OWA) have remained relatively steady. However, enrollments in the Jobs for Ohio Graduates (JOG) program have increased in recent years. According to the Ohio Department of Human Services staff, enrollments in Graduation, Reality, And Dual-role Skills (GRADS) and Learning, Earning, And Parenting (LEAP) programs have decreased as the teen pregnancy rate in Ohio has dropped.

The following two exhibits illustrate the changes in program enrollment for three recent years; the Ohio Department of Education could not provide enrollment figures for the 1996-1997 school year.

Enrollment in At-risk Programs



	Enrollment			
	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97
OWE	13,002	13,996	13,358	NA
OWA	11,063	12,225	11,722	NA
JOG	6,028	6,772	9,546	NA
GRADS	12,055	11,897	8,670	NA
LEAP	5,039	5,295	3,732	3,592

Enrollment includes all students who officially enrolled in the program at any point during the year.
NA – Not Available

Similar to enrollments in OWE and OWA, funding for these programs has remained relatively steady. However, funding for JOG has increased, reflecting the trend with enrollments in the program. The following exhibit shows the changes in program funding for the five at-risk programs for three recent years.

Funding of At-risk Programs

Program	93/94		94/95		95/96	
	State Funding*	Units Funded	State Funding*	Units Funded	State Funding*	Units Funded
OWE	$25.4	638	$25.3	637	$24.9	613
OWA	$24.8	629	$25.7	652	$25.6	636
GRADS	$9.4	247	$9.6	251	$9.8	249
JOG	$5.4	**	$5.4	**	$8.2	**
LEAP	$7.3	**	$7.8	**	$6.9	**

*- In millions of dollars
** - Not unit funded

APPENDIX C
The 21 Large Urban School Districts

Akron City School District
Canton City School District
Cincinnati City School District
Cleveland City School District
Cleveland Heights City School District
Columbus City School District
Dayton City School District
East Cleveland City School District
Elyria City School District
Euclid City School District
Hamilton City School District
Lima City School District
Lorain City School District
Mansfield City School District
Middletown City School District
Parma City School District
South-Western City School District
Springfield City School District
Toledo City School District
Warren City School District
Youngstown City School District

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